

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method of digital video program reproduction within defined
5 premises, said method comprising the steps of:

a) receiving a plurality of electronic audio-visual programs;
b) storing said programs in memory;
c) providing a plurality of program reproduction devices adapted to
reproduce programs for viewers/users;

10 d) networking said memory and said program reproduction devices;
e) selecting a program ("selected program"); and
f) distributing the ability to control reproduction of said selected pro-
gram among two or more reproduction devices so that, at the selection of a
viewer, said reproduction of said selected program is seamless between said
15 reproduction devices.

2. The method in Claim 1, wherein said reproduction devices con-
temporaneously display said selected program on two or more of said repro-
duction devices.

3. The method in Claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

designating as part of a hierarchy, a control ranking to each of said reproduction devices; and

during control conflicts, allowing the reproduction device attempting to control playback having the highest control ranking, to control the reproduction of said selected program.

4. The method in Claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

designating one reproduction device as a master device;

designating other reproduction devices as slave devices; and

during control conflicts involving the master device and slave devices,

allowing the master reproduction device to control playback of said selected program.

5. The method in Claim 1, wherein Steps e) and f) are carried out during a “live-pause” episode.

6. The method in Claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

viewing a selected program via a first reproduction device;

establishing a pause point;

pausing the playback of said selected program via said first reproduction device; and

resuming the playback of said selected program via a second reproduction device from said pause point.

7. The method in Claim 5 wherein two or more reproduction devices are capable of reproducing a selected program independently.

8. A system for digital video program reproduction within defined premises, said system comprising:

5 a) a program receiver adapted to receive a plurality of electronic audio-visual programs;

b) memory adapted to store said programs;

c) a plurality of program reproduction devices adapted to reproduce programs for viewers/users; and

10 d) a network adapted to network said memory and said program reproduction devices;

wherein the ability to control reproduction of a selected program among two or more reproduction devices is distributed so that, at the selection of a viewer, said reproduction of said selected program is seamless between said reproduction devices.

9. The system in Claim 8, wherein said memory is subsumed by a server.

10. The system in Claim 8, wherein said reproduction devices contemporaneously display said selected program on two or more of said reproduction devices.

11. The system in Claim 8, wherein each said reproduction device is designated to have, as part of a hierarchy, a control ranking, and during control conflicts, the reproduction device attempting to control playback having the highest control ranking, controls the reproduction of said selected
5 program.

12. The system in Claim 8, wherein one of said reproduction devices is designated as a “master device,” and the other reproduction devices are designated as “slave devices,” and during control conflicts involving the master device and slave devices, the master reproduction device controls
10 playback of said selected program.

13. The system in Claim 8, wherein said system is adapted to function in a “live-pause” mode.

14. The system in Claim 8, wherein said system is adapted to allow viewing a selected program via a first reproduction device, establish a pause
15 point, pause the playback of said selected program via said first reproduction device, and resume the playback of said selected program via a second reproduction device from said pause point.

15. The system in Claim 13 wherein two or more reproduction devices are adapted to reproduce a selected program independently.

16. A method of digital video program reproduction within defined premises, said method comprising the steps of:

a) receiving a plurality of electronic audio-visual programs;

b) storing said programs in memory;

5 c) providing a plurality of program reproduction devices adapted to reproduce programs for viewers/users;

d) networking said memory and said program reproduction devices;

and

10 e) contemporaneously displaying a plurality of said programs on at least one reproduction device.

17. A system for digital video program reproduction within defined premises, said system comprising:

a) a program receiver adapted to receive a plurality of electronic audio-visual programs;

15 b) memory adapted to store said programs;

c) a plurality of program reproduction devices adapted to reproduce programs for viewers/users; and

d) a network adapted to network said memory and said program reproduction devices;

wherein said reproduction devices are adapted to contemporaneously display a plurality of said programs on at least one reproduction device.